



MINNESOTA WASTE WISE  
FACT SHEET  
**ELECTRONIC WASTE**

**RESOURCES**

**U.S. EPA E-cycling**

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/conservation/materials/ecycling/faq.htm>

**RethinkRecycling**

[www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com)

**REUSE**

**The Cristina Foundation**

<http://www.cristina.org/>

**Habitat for Humanity ReStore**

[www.tchabitat.org](http://www.tchabitat.org)

**U.S. EPA Plug-In Partners**

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin/computers.htm>

**RECYCLERS**

**Materials Processing Corporation (MPC)**

Mendota Heights, MN  
(651) 681-8099  
[www.materialsprocessing.com](http://www.materialsprocessing.com)

**Ocean Tech**

**IT Disposition Services**

Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 331-4456  
[www.oceantechonline.com](http://www.oceantechonline.com)

**The Retrofit Companies**

Owatonna, MN  
(800) 795-1230  
[www.retrofitcompanies.com/](http://www.retrofitcompanies.com/)

**OVERVIEW**

Electronic Waste (or e-waste) is created when electronic equipment reaches the end of its useful life. The MPCA defines e-waste as any waste that has a circuit board or cathode-ray tube (CRT). These materials often contain heavy metals; lead, nickel, cadmium, and mercury. In recent years e-waste has become a cause of global concern, ending up in waterways or in burn piles in developing countries. *In Minnesota, it is illegal to dispose of e-waste in the trash.*

**FACTS**

- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as recently as 2007 less than 20 percent by weight of electronics (televisions, computer products and cell phones) in the United States were recycled. This leaves approximately 304 million units that were discarded in the trash.
- The U.S. Geological Survey points out that one metric ton of electronic scrap from personal computers contains more gold than is recovered from 17 tons of gold ore.

**PREVENTION**

To avoid generating E-Waste, consider:

- Leasing electronic equipment as opposed to purchasing it outright
- Repairing or upgrading older equipment to extend the useful life
- Include take backs in any electronics purchase contracts

**REUSE**

One option prior to disposal is to donate your old computers and electronics for reuse. Many donation programs have specific requirements for acceptable electronics, so it's important to do some research beforehand. Donating computers can be very beneficial to the local community by providing internet access, word processing, and spreadsheet capabilities to organizations, like school districts, that would have had a hard time affording access otherwise. Donations may result in a tax deduction for your organization. In addition to local nonprofits, many e-waste recyclers will refurbish and sell usable equipment.

**RECYCLING**

E-waste contains resources that are very energy intensive to produce, like copper and other precious metals. Recycling these materials can produce substantial energy savings versus producing the material from virgin sources.

Before recycling E-Waste:

- Ask questions. Understand how and where your e-waste is being recycled.
- Destroy sensitive data or contract with a data removal company or check with your recycler to see if they offer data destruction services